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ABSTRACT

This program quality review instrument was designed for use in determining the quality of California's family day care programs in terms of seven functional components. These components included: (1) philosophy, goals, and objectives; (2) administration; (3) identification of the child's and family's needs; (4) home environment; (5) parent education and involvement; (6) community resources and involvement; and (7) program evaluation. The instrument specified for each functional component indicators and items which reviewers could check depending on whether the requirements of the functional component had been met. Verification of the presence and effectiveness of an indicator or item was made through documentation, observation, interview, or a combination of these methods. The instrument used was also designed to be used in self-review, as a teaching tool, and as the basis of planning for program improvement. Programs were rated excellent, good, adequate, or inadequate; if rated inadequate, programs must submit an improvement plan within 30 days of the review. (RH)

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Prepared by the
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The development of this instrument is due in large part to the working committee of the California Family Child Care System Association. The members of the committee utilized their individual experiences as former day care operators, resource teachers, coordinators, and program directors in preparation of the instrument. The instrument was also submitted to the individual members of the California Family Child Care System Association for their feedback. Finally, the participation of Child Development Division staff, especially Robert Freeman and Milena Gilbert, provided input to bring the instrument to its present form. Special recognition goes to Kay Witcher, Administrator, Field Services, Region III, for coordinating the development of the instrument.

AUTHORITY

Senate Bill 863 (Education Code Section 8203, Chapter 796, Statutes of 1980) requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction to develop standards for the implementation of quality programs and to identify areas for indicators of quality that shall include, but not be limited to:

a. A physical environment that is safe and appropriate to the ages of the children and meets applicable licensing standards.

b. Program activities and services that are age appropriate and developmentally meet the needs of each child.

c. Program activities and services that meet the cultural, linguistic, and other special needs of children and families being served.

d. Family and community involvement.

e. Parent education.

f. Efficient and effective local program administration.

g. Staff that possesses the appropriate and required qualifications or experience, or both. The appropriate staff qualifications shall reflect the diverse linguistic and cultural make-up of the children and families in the child care and development program. The use of intergenerational staff shall be encouraged.

h. Support services for children, families, and providers of care.

i. Resource and referral services.

j. Alternative payment services.

k. Provision for nutritional needs of children.

l. Social services that include, but are not limited to, identification of child and family needs and referral to appropriate agencies.

m. Health services that include referral of children to appropriate agencies for services.

OVERVIEW

A QUALITY FAMILY CHILD CARE HOME is characterized by a warm, caring environment which fosters social and emotional experiences enriched by interactions between children and adults. More than just babysitters, family home caregivers provide opportunities for young children to grow and develop in small group settings.

Family homes which are licensed by the State Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing, must meet standards for health, safety, and nutrition. They also provide a nurturing atmosphere which helps to meet the multicultural and multilingual needs of children. An appropriate family child care environment allows for emotionally nurturing interactions and facilitates feelings of trust and security. As children grow in this environment, they explore, question, and experiment with concepts in a home setting, thus encouraging problem solving, self-help skills, natural maturation, and language development.

A subsidized family child care program is a network of family child care homes which receives funding to defray the cost of care for income eligible families. These family child care homes receive technical assistance, access to materials, resources, and support services from their administering agency. This partnership between agency, caregiver, and family offers an alternative to center care for families who require child care services.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INSTRUMENT

This program quality review instrument was designed to determine the quality of a Family Child Care program. Seven functional components will be evaluated. They are used as the basis for the Program Quality Review since they identify the requirements that the Child Development Division has for program implementation. These functional components include: Philosophy, Goals, and Objectives; Administration; Identification of the Child's and Family's Needs; Home Environment; Parent Education and Involvement; Community Resources and Involvement; and Program Evaluation.

Within each functional component there are indicators and items which the reviewers check to determine whether or not the requirements of the functional component have been met.

Verification of the presence and effectiveness of an indicator or item will be made through documentation, observation, interview, or a combination of these methods. The instrument will indicate the verification method to be used. If documentation is required, it is incumbent on the program staff to provide the materials which verify that the indicator or item is present. Functional component G, Evaluation, has been added as an individual component to be examined. Agencies should determine their effectiveness and the quality of their functioning as a regular part of the program.

USES FOR THE INSTRUMENT

The Child Development Division designed this instrument to communicate in simple, yet direct, language with the expectation that a respectful attitude regarding young children and their families, staff, and community would prevail. It is meant to fulfill four distinct purposes:

1. Self-Review

   An annual self-review is required as part of the service contract. It is required that governing or advisory boards and program staff will conduct a self-review and will use the results to set program goals. The self-review should be useful to staff preparing for a formal review.

2. A Teaching Tool

   For administrators, instructional and support staff, governing boards, or advisory committees, this instrument is designed to serve as a step-by-step approach for assessing the quality of the program.

3. Review of Program Quality

   The Child Development Division (CDD) will use the instrument to monitor and score programs for program quality. In this process CDD will also evaluate the extent to which the activity or plan is appropriate. Consultant assistance will be available to those programs that are rated in the inadequate range.

4. Program Improvement

If a program has been rated in the "adequate" range and above, program staff will be encouraged to select areas of the program that the staff would like to work on for improvement.

RATING

Each program component has been given a certain number of points, and the total points of the components determine the program rating. Programs are assessed according to the indicators and items within the components. The number of points earned by the program are totaled, and the program is rated as excellent, good, adequate, or inadequate.

Programs achieving a rating of "inadequate" are required to submit a program improvement plan which will bring their rating at least to the adequate range. Assistance may be provided by the consultant in selecting the areas to concentrate on for improvement. The plan must be submitted to the Child Development Division within thirty (30) calendar days after the date of the program quality review.

PREPARATION FOR AND CONDUCTING OF THE PROGRAM REVIEW

No later than September 1st, programs to be reviewed during the fiscal year will be notified by letter. This notification will be followed by a phone call from the assigned consultant for the purpose of setting the specific date for the review. A letter confirming the date for the review and what materials should be available will be sent to the program at least two weeks prior to the review. The program will also be asked to designate a small working space for the team. The team will review three homes for those programs serving up to 100 homes and six homes for programs serving more than 100 homes.

Two people will conduct the review, and every effort will be made by the reviewers not to disturb the program operations. The review is expected to take one day, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., for programs serving 100 homes or less. The review is expected to take a day and a half for programs serving over 100 homes. This review time includes the following:

Entry Meeting

The review team will meet with the program director and other appropriate staff to review the schedule, determine where needed materials are located, and answer procedural questions.

Tour of the office

A general tour of the office will familiarize the review team with the general layout.

Observation period

An observation period of at least 30 minutes will occur at each home reviewed.

Review of written materials

Written materials which verify the presence of an item are to be available in one place. Confidential material should be appropriately protected.

Interviews

Individual interviews will be conducted with the program director and providers. Either individual or group interviews will be conducted with staff, parents, and board members.

Exit meeting

At the conclusion of the review, the reviewers will share the results of the review with the program director and other staff, parents, or board members who can be present.

A. PHILOSOPHY, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES

The program philosophy should be based on a set of principles which recognize the developmental needs of the children and is transferred to goals and objectives and which are appropriate to the needs of the children and families. Clear program goals are formulated, with objectives for the whole program to follow. The goals and objectives recognize that all children develop according to a generally recognized normative pattern; that children may reach these norms at different times; and that variations may be due to individual differences, special needs, or cultural differences. All of these differences are considered in the overall activity plan. This plan includes activities which will be provided for children, for parents, and for the provider.

Documentation

1.1 The board has approved the overall program goals, which include administration, provider recruiting, and support services designed to improve the quality of care in Family Child Care homes.

1.2 The agency has a clearly stated plan to achieve the program goals, and the plan identifies persons responsible for achieving goals.

1.3 The goals and objectives address the following areas:

1.3.1 Administration
1.3.2 Staffing
1.3.3 Support services
1.3.4 Parent education and involvement
1.3.5 Community involvement
1.3.6 Developmental activities for the children which recognize individual differences and acknowledge cultural diversity of the families

Interview

1.4 The agency can demonstrate implementation of the plan to achieve overall program goals.

B. ADMINISTRATION

1. Program Management

Staff needs to know how they fit into the overall organization and what their jobs entail. The board must be knowledgeable about the budget, and the director should be informed and keep the board updated on the agency's fiscal position.

Documentation

1.1 The administrative responsibility for each part of the program has been assigned and can be identified on an organizational chart and through job description.

Interview

1.2 Responsibilities as identified above are being carried out.

1.3 The fiscal and program manager review the earnings monthly to ensure that the agency is operating within approved budget and report findings to the board.

Documentation/Interview

1.4 The board has approved the budget and it is available to the staff.

2. Personnel Policies

Staff members need to know agency policies and adminstrative expectations when their employment begins. The agency needs a recruitment plan that ensures the selection of qualified providers to meet the needs of the children and families to be served.

Documentation

2.1 The board has approved personnel policies that include, but are not limited to, employment, evaluation, and promotion procedures; lay-off, description of benefits, and causes for termination; grievance and confidentiality.

2.2 The agency has a plan for implementation of board-approved policies.

2.3 The agency has a recruitment plan for providers and staff which addresses the ethnic and linguistic background of the children and families served.

Interview

2.4 Implementation of the plan demonstrates that an effort has been made to employ staff and/or contract with providers who reflect the ethnic and linguistic composition of children and families served.

Documentation/Interview

2.5 The personnel policies have been implemented and are accessible to each employee.

3. Staff Development

A well-trained staff is essential to the success of a program. Staff members should have an opportunity to identify their staff development needs and provide input into the overall staff development plan. The provision of workshops, off-site training, and on-the-job training assists staff in improving their job skills and encourages professional growth.

Documentation

3.1 The agency has a staff development plan that addresses the following:

3.1.1 Child growth and development
3.1.2 First aid and safety
3.1.3 Discipline
3.1.4 Home environment
3.1.5 Child Abuse determination
3.1.6 Child Health
3.1.7 Nutrition education
3.1.8 Identification of children's needs

3.2 The agency has identified educational resources that are available to staff for on-site and off-site training.

Interview

3.3 The agency's staff development plan has been implemented.

3.4 The staff development plan is periodically reviewed with staff participation to reflect changing needs of staff.

4. Provider Payment/Participation

Providers are the core of the Family Child Care program. A complete and accurate written plan should be maintained on the provider's participation in the program. Prompt payment for child care services provided helps to ensure continued participation in the program by the providers. An effective written plan for provider payment should be maintained, along with an up-to-date listing of children enrolled in each home.

Documentation

4.1 The program has written policies and procedures for provider participation which includes, but is not limited to: maximizing parental choice; accepting and rejecting providers' request for affiliation with the program; handling complaints regarding providers and handling complaints from providers regarding the program; and terminating providers' affiliation with the program. There should be written policies regarding reporting suspected child abuse/neglect; regarding insurance; and regarding the use of seat belts. There should be a statement prohibiting religious instruction, and a statement prohibiting any form of illegal discrimination.

4.2 There is a written agreement with all providers which includes providers' fee to agency; services which are provided for fee; instructions to providers for claiming reimbursement; declaration of provider fees charged to nonsubsidized families. A copy of current license shall be in the agreement file.

Interview

4.3 The program staff makes the policies, procedures, and grievance procedures available to each provider in the program.

4.4 The program staff visits providers to ensure compliance with the policies and procedures.

Documentation

4.5 The program has a plan for payment to providers which allows for timely payments and specifies how fees, if any, are to be collected. The plan is implemented.

5. Technical Assistance and Provider Workshops

Well-trained providers are integral to the operation of a Family Child Care System. Providers need to know what is expected of them and what constitutes a well-run family child care home. They need to be trained so that they have the skills to fulfill their responsibilities.

Documentation

5.1 The agency staff will identify provider needs for training and technical assistance.

5.2 The agency staff has a plan for provider training and technical assistance. The plan includes developing caregiver skills appropriate to the ages of the children present.

5.3 The agency staff will implement the plan for providing training and technical assistance which may include resource teacher assistance; periodic meetings and workshops that are provided by either the agency or other community resources; and agency newsletters.

C. IDENTIFICATION OF CHILD'S AND FAMILY'S NEEDS

Each child receives an assessment of his or her developmental level on entering the program. This assessment may be formal or informal. However, the solicited information must be complete enough so that the agency can make a sensible plan for the child. Information is solicited from the parents regarding each child's likes and dislikes and other information which will help to design an appropriate plan to meet each child's individual needs. The family's social service needs are also identified.

Documentation

1.1 Each child's needs are identified in the areas of health, special physical needs, cognitive, social, and emotional development by the agency and shared with his/her caregiver as appropriate.

1.2 The agency has a process for identifying the social service needs of the family and referring the family to the appropriate services.

D. HOME ENVIRONMENT

1. Physical Environment

There should be enough materials and equipment in the home so that all children can be occupied with an activity at the same time. Furniture should be in good repair and appropriate for children.

Observation

1.1 There is sufficient furniture to provide that all children can eat or sleep at the same time and for each child to have his/her individual storage space. Toileting facilities are appropriate to the ages of the children.

1.2 Equipment and space are provided for play activities which are developmentally appropriate. Furniture, such as soft chairs and couches, is available for the use of the children.

1.3 The indoor/outdoor environment is clean and free from hazards. Children have access to age-appropriate play equipment and an area for free play.

2. Nutrition

The nutritional program provides a direct link to the child's physical and mental development. It is essential that the child have appropriate nutrition in order to maximize physical and mental growth.

Observation

2.1 The program provides nutritional meals and snacks which meet USDA guidelines. The menus are available for parents.

2.2 Mealtimes are supervised and used as learning opportunities, and an attempt is made to have children try all foods.

Interview

2.3 Providers work with parents to incorporate their cultural and nutritional preferences.

3. Atmosphere for Child's Growth

There are many opportunities for providers to interact with children. Social interactions have been shown to positively affect children's cognitive, social, and emotional experiences. Provider behavior can positively affect children's peer relationships.

Observation

3.1 Provider is available for parents and children at arrival and pickup time.

3.2 Provider greets children as they enter and helps children during difficult transitions of the day.

3.3 Provider shows behavior that enhances each child's self-esteem; anticipates children's needs and acts on them; and is sensitive to cultural differences.

4. Program Activities

The structure and arrangement of appropriate developmental activities defines the daily program. The program should provide both stimulating group activities and periods of relaxation, so that both learning and socialization take place. Information gained from the assessments of the children is considered in planning activities.

Observation

4.1 There are materials and opportunities available for children's activities which are developmentally appropriate.

Documentation

4.2 Activities are provided which enhance language development, psychomotor skills, problem solving, and socialization. Daily routines have been developed and there is a written schedule.

4.3 Group and individual activities take into consideration the identified needs of the children as assessed by the agency, in cooperation with the parent and provider.

Observation

4.4 Provider uses age and developmentally appropriate method such as separation and redirection to place behavioral limits on children. Positive behavior is encouraged, and aggressive behavior is discouraged. Provider shows respect, kindness, and affection to all children.

E. PARENT EDUCATION AND INVOLVEMENT

1. Education and Involvement of Parents

Parents can positively affect the quality of the child care program just as the child care program can affect the quality of the relationship parents have with their children. Parents or other authorized adults should be comfortable in visiting the program whenever they so desire. Parents should be provided opportunities for discussion of child-rearing issues with the provider and agency.

Documentation

1.1 Agency has an open door policy that encourages parents to participate and be involved with the children.

1.2 Parenting education workshops are offered at least three times a year.

1.3 Educational interests and needs of parents are identified.

1.4 Educational activities for parents are designed based on parental need and interest.

F. COMMUNITY RESOURCES AND INVOLVEMENT

1. Community Resources

The program is integrated into the commuity and elicits help from community sources to provide support for program operations.

Documentation

1.1 The agency staff identifies the community resources available to child care providers and families.

1.2 The agency staff makes current information available on a routine basis relevant to individual and community needs.

Interview

1.3 Community resources such as information and referral services, toy-lending libraries, ethnic and cultural information, and resources are utilized by the agency and providers and families, as appropriate.

G. PROGRAM EVALUATION

The agency shall have a formative evaluation plan which should be developed and implemented as an ongoing process in order to determine if the program goals and objectives have been met and to evaluate the level of quality within the program. Staff and parents should be involved in the evaluation, and changes should be made as identified through the evaluation process.

Documentation

1.1 Director, program staff, and parents annually evaluate in writing all aspects of the program and recommend changes as necessary.

1.2 Agency has implemented recommended changes or provided rationale for not implementing recommendations.

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